

**BILL:** AB 2051 (Wicks, D-Oakland)  
Introduced February 18, 2026

**SUBJECT:** AB 2051 would establish a state Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group to streamline and accelerate permitting for coastal resilience and adaptation.

**STATUS:** Pending in Assembly

**SUMMARY AS OF MARCH 3, 2026:**

AB 2051 establishes a Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group to develop a statewide Coastal Resilience Permitting Roadmap (Roadmap) intended to streamline and accelerate permitting for coastal resilience and sea level rise adaptation projects along the California coast and in the San Francisco Bay. The bill requires the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, in consultation with the Secretary for Environmental Protection, to convene the Working Group and submit the Roadmap to the Governor and the Legislature by January 1, 2028. The Working Group is to include representatives from federal, state, and local agencies, including, but not limited to, the California Coastal Commission, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Lands Commission, the State Coastal Conservancy, the Ocean Protection Council, the State Water Resources Control Board, and other relevant permitting and resource agencies.

The Roadmap must include recommendations to improve permitting timelines and coordination within existing authority. This includes streamlining completeness determinations, coordinating interagency review processes, developing more unified and predictable application procedures, establishing structured interagency project management approaches, standardizing mitigation requirements, expanding the use of regional and programmatic permits, evaluating pilot or consolidated permitting approaches, identifying potential legislative reforms, and assessing workforce needs and funding strategies to address staffing shortages that contribute to delays.

AB 2051 also requires the California Coastal Commission and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, in collaboration with other relevant agencies, to convene a Coastal Resilience Permit Advisory Group by April 1, 2027. The Advisory Group is intended to support the Working Group by providing stakeholder input and feedback on proposed permitting reforms. Membership must include state agencies, local governments, ports, local transportation agencies, wastewater agencies, tribes, and other stakeholders.

**EFFECTS ON ORANGE COUNTY:**

Existing law establishes a multi-agency coastal permitting framework involving state and federal agencies with jurisdiction over projects in or adjacent to coastal and tidally influenced areas. Coastal development and resilience projects often require approvals from multiple agencies operating under distinct statutory authorities and timelines.

Project-specific study requirements and overlapping jurisdictions can extend permitting timelines for infrastructure projects.

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) owns and maintains over 40 miles of the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor within Orange County, including seven miles located directly along the coast. This corridor supports intercity passenger rail, commuter rail, and freight service critical to regional mobility, economic activity, and national defense operations.

Segments of the corridor, particularly in the City of San Clemente, are vulnerable to coastal erosion, bluff instability, sea level rise, and extreme weather events. In recent years, landslides and bluff failures have required repeated emergency stabilization efforts and have resulted in prolonged service disruptions. OCTA has secured substantial state and federal funding for long-term stabilization and resilience improvements; however, project delivery timelines are significantly affected by multi-agency permitting requirements and extended review processes. By directing state agencies to evaluate administrative streamlining measures and coordinated review processes, AB 2051 may improve predictability, consistency, and processing timelines for coastal resilience projects affecting the LOSSAN Rail Corridor. Expanded use of programmatic permits, standardized mitigation approaches, and improved interagency coordination could also help alleviate permitting challenges for transportation projects more broadly within the coastal zone where state and federal jurisdiction overlaps.

AB 2051 may provide the following potential benefits for Orange County and the LOSSAN Rail Corridor:

- Improved coordination among permitting agencies, reducing duplicative review and increasing timeline predictability.
- Greater consistency in mitigation standards and expectations across agencies.
- Expanded use of programmatic or regional permits that may be applicable to recurring stabilization activities.
- Evaluation of consolidated or pilot permitting approaches that could reduce overall processing time for resilience projects.
- Assessment of regulatory staffing needs, which may lead to funding strategies that address capacity constraints contributing to delays.

The inclusion of local transportation agencies on the Advisory Group provides OCTA with a potential opportunity to help shape proposed permitting reforms and ensure that rail corridor protection and adaptation projects are recognized as coastal resilience projects.

AB 2051 is sponsored by the Bay Planning Coalition and the Bay Area Council. A SUPPORT position is consistent with OCTA's 2025–26 State Legislative Platform principle to “Seek funding and other administrative solutions, such as permit streamlining, to support adaptation and resiliency efforts throughout the rail corridor.”

**OCTA POSITION:**

Staff recommends: SUPPORT

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 2051**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Wicks**

February 18, 2026

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An act to add Division 20.8 (commencing with Section 30990) to the Public Resources Code, relating to public resources.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2051, as introduced, Wicks. Public resources: Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group.

Existing law establishes the Natural Resources Agency and vests the agency with jurisdiction over various public resources. Existing law establishes the California Environmental Protection Agency and sets out its mission for programs, policies, and standards. Under existing law, various state entities, including the California Coastal Commission, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife have responsibilities with respect to coastal permitting and development.

This bill would require the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, in consultation with the Secretary for Environmental Protection, to convene a Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group for the purpose of developing a Coastal Resilience Permitting Roadmap for coastal resilience projects proposed in specified areas. The bill would require the Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group to consist of representatives from federal, state, and local agencies, including, among others, the California Coastal Commission, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The bill would, on or before January 1, 2028, require the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency to submit the Coastal Resilience Permitting Roadmap

to the Governor and the relevant fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature. The bill would require, on or before April 1, 2027, the California Coastal Commission and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, in collaboration with the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Regional Water Quality Boards with jurisdiction over the coast and the San Francisco Bay, to convene a Coastal Resilience Permit Advisory Group to support the deliberations of the Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Division 20.8 (commencing with Section 30990)  
2 is added to the Public Resources Code, to read:

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4 DIVISION 20.8. COASTAL RESILIENCE

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6 30990. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
7 following:

8 (1) The Ocean Protection Council’s 2024 State of California  
9 Sea Level Rise Guidance includes a projection that by the year  
10 2100, statewide averaged sea levels are expected to rise between  
11 1.6 feet and 3.1 feet under the Intermediate-Low and Intermediate  
12 Scenarios.

13 (2) The Ocean Protection Council’s guidance also notes that  
14 higher amounts of up to 6.6 feet or more of sea level rise in very  
15 high risk, low-probability cases cannot be ruled out.

16 (3) In 2023, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission of  
17 the San Francisco Bay area, in consultation with the Association  
18 of Bay Area Governments and the San Francisco Bay Conservation  
19 and Development Commission, published the Sea Level Rise  
20 Adaptation Funding and Investment Framework Final Report with  
21 an estimate of one hundred ten billion dollars (\$110,000,000,000)  
22 to adapt San Francisco Bay communities and critical infrastructure  
23 to sea level rise by 2050.

24 (4) In 2024, the Legislature adopted Division 20.6.9  
25 (commencing with Section 30985) requiring the California Coastal  
26 Commission and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and  
27 Development Commission to publish guidelines for the preparation

1 of sea level rise plans and for local communities to seek review  
2 and approval of these plans by 2034 to remain eligible for resilience  
3 funding from the state.

4 (5) Construction activities along the California coast and in the  
5 San Francisco Bay in federal waters are regulated by a wide range  
6 of state and federal agencies operating under a comprehensive set  
7 of state and federal environmental laws.

8 (6) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's  
9 North-Central California Coastal Sediment Coordination  
10 Committee published a 2024 Efficient Permitting Roadmap that  
11 provides a description of permitting roles for state and federal  
12 agencies and preferred approaches for habitat restoration projects.

13 (7) Together, these laws and the work of these agencies, provide  
14 critical protection for the health of the Pacific Ocean and the San  
15 Francisco Bay.

16 (8) The combination of overlapping, and sometimes duplicative,  
17 federal and state authorities, requirements for project-specific  
18 studies, limited regulatory agency staffing, interagency  
19 coordination needs, and inconsistency and uncertainty regarding  
20 mitigation requirements results in extended permitting timelines  
21 for all projects in or adjacent to federal waters, including coastal  
22 resilience projects.

23 (9) Permitting staff positions at relevant agencies require  
24 extensive education and experience regarding complex ecosystems  
25 and marine environments, and related expertise such as knowledge  
26 of historic and cultural resources.

27 (10) Numerous reports, including the California Coastal  
28 Commission 2021–2025 Workforce Plan, the University of  
29 California Berkeley Labor Center's "Civil Service Vacancies in  
30 California: 2022–2023," the Central Coast Regional Water Quality  
31 Control Board's 2022 Executive Officer's Report, and the 2025  
32 National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officer's  
33 Workforce Report, document the challenge of recruiting and  
34 retaining qualified staff to process complicated permit applications.

35 (11) The Governor and the Legislature have previously  
36 addressed permitting timelines and processes related to rebuilding  
37 after natural disasters such as the January 2025 wildfires, and to  
38 facilitate timely development and permitting of offshore wind and  
39 transmission facilities in the state.

1 (b) Given the myriad of benefits from coastal resilience projects  
2 to California communities, the Secretary of the Natural Resources  
3 Agency shall develop a Coastal Resilience Permitting Roadmap  
4 with recommendations for process improvements and legislative  
5 reforms that will enable efficient and timely delivery of  
6 environmental approvals for these projects, as provided in Section  
7 30991.

8 30991. (a) (1) The Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency,  
9 in consultation with the Secretary for Environmental Protection,  
10 shall convene a Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group for  
11 the purpose of developing a Coastal Resilience Permitting  
12 Roadmap for coastal resilience projects proposed along the  
13 California coast and in the San Francisco Bay, and in and adjacent  
14 to state and federal waters.

15 (2) The Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group shall  
16 consist of representatives from federal, state, and local agencies,  
17 including, but not limited to, representatives from all of the  
18 following entities:

19 (A) The California Coastal Commission.

20 (B) The California Environmental Protection Agency.

21 (C) The California Regional Water Quality Control Boards, San  
22 Francisco Bay, North Coast, and Central Coast.

23 (D) The Department of Fish and Wildlife.

24 (E) The Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation.

25 (F) The Natural Resources Agency.

26 (G) The Ocean Protection Council.

27 (H) The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development  
28 Commission.

29 (I) The State Coastal Conservancy.

30 (J) The State Historical Resources Commission.

31 (K) The State Lands Commission.

32 (L) The State Office of Historic Preservation.

33 (M) The State Water Resources Control Board.

34 (3) Development of the Coastal Resilience Permitting Roadmap  
35 shall incorporate, but not delay, progress to advance responsible  
36 permitting and development of coastal resilience projects.

37 (b) (1) On or before January 1, 2028, the Secretary of the  
38 Natural Resources Agency shall submit the Coastal Resilience  
39 Permitting Roadmap to the Governor and the relevant fiscal and  
40 policy committees of the Legislature.

1 (2) The plan submitted to the Legislature pursuant to paragraph  
2 (1) shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the  
3 Government Code.

4 (3) Pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, this  
5 subdivision shall become inoperative on January 1, 2032.

6 (c) The Coastal Resilience Permitting Roadmap developed  
7 pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) shall include, at a  
8 minimum, recommendations that address all of the following:

9 (1) Administrative reforms that can be implemented by state  
10 agencies within their existing authority to improve permit issuance  
11 timelines, including all of the following:

12 (A) Streamlining the process for determinations that applications  
13 are complete, including limits on additional information requests  
14 and timelines for initial and successive reviews.

15 (B) Unified applications with a predictable sequence and  
16 timeline of permitting information requests and interagency  
17 reviews.

18 (C) An interagency project management team for multiagency  
19 permitting, modeled on the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration  
20 Team.

21 (D) Methods to standardize compensatory mitigation across  
22 agencies, including use of engineering with nature features to  
23 enable projects to self-mitigate and a de minimis fill policy that  
24 allows de minimis fill within defined thresholds without the need  
25 to mitigate.

26 (E) Delegating permit issuance to executive officers or using  
27 consent calendars when commission or board action is required  
28 by law.

29 (F) Expanded use of regional general permits and programmatic  
30 agreements for known categories of coastal resilience projects.

31 (G) Process improvements that allow for permit approval earlier  
32 in the design process, and for subsequent design changes arising  
33 from field conditions and in-depth engineering analysis.

34 (H) Standard measures that can be applied to pile driving and  
35 fill placement techniques, and other practices that are known to  
36 safeguard marine resources, including the types of conditions under  
37 which these measures should be utilized and can be scaled to  
38 varying project scope and footprint.

39 (2) A state process to align agency mitigation requirements and  
40 enable in-lieu fees or advance mitigation through which applicants

1 can contribute funding to eligible restoration or mitigation  
2 initiatives, thereby avoiding temporal loss of habitat and associated  
3 increased mitigation requirements, and reducing the need for  
4 individual applicants to develop and implement project-specific  
5 compensatory mitigation projects.

6 (3) Legislative reforms that can further accelerate permitting  
7 for projects that increase coastal resilience, with a focus on current  
8 legislative requirements that result in extensive analysis that could  
9 be avoided by application of standardized compensatory mitigation,  
10 advance mitigation, or standard construction practices.

11 (4) If needed to test alternative approaches, a coastal resilience  
12 project pilot program along with any required legislative  
13 authorizations to evaluate the effectiveness of recommended  
14 reforms and environmental protection.

15 (5) An evaluation of whether consolidated coastal resilience  
16 permits similar to those provided in Division 20 (commencing  
17 with Section 30000) for offshore wind projects would facilitate  
18 timely permits.

19 (6) A workforce assessment and funding options for regulatory  
20 staffing positions and as-needed permitting support contracts to  
21 supplement staff, including a specific analysis of recommended  
22 pay scales needed to recruit and retain permitting staff that reflect  
23 the educational requirements for these positions, the cost of living  
24 in areas where these staff live and work, and private sector  
25 compensation for similar skills.

26 (d) To support deliberations of the Coastal Resilience Permitting  
27 Working Group, on or before April 1, 2027, the California Coastal  
28 Commission and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and  
29 Development Commission, in collaboration with the Department  
30 of Fish and Wildlife, and the California Regional Water Quality  
31 Control Boards with jurisdiction over the California coast and San  
32 Francisco Bay, shall convene a Coastal Resilience Permit Advisory  
33 Group. Coastal Resilience Permit Advisory Group membership  
34 shall include, but not be limited to, representatives of each of the  
35 following:

36 (1) The Department of Transportation, the State Coastal  
37 Conservancy, and other relevant state agencies that seek permits  
38 for projects in coastal areas.

39 (2) Local governments subject to the requirements of Division  
40 20.6.9 (commencing with Section 30895).

1 (3) California ports.

2 (4) Local transportation agencies and wastewater treatment  
3 agencies.

4 (5) California Native American tribes that are on the contact  
5 list administered and maintained by the Native American Heritage  
6 Commission.

7 (6) Other members of the public, including businesses, home  
8 and affordable housing builders, commercial and recreational  
9 fishers, environmental organizations, environmental justice  
10 organizations, and others.

11 (e) The California Coastal Commission and the San Francisco  
12 Bay Conservation and Development Commission, in consultation  
13 with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the California  
14 Regional Water Quality Control Boards with jurisdiction over the  
15 California coast and San Francisco Bay, shall conduct a series of  
16 public workshops with the Coastal Resilience Permit Advisory  
17 Group or subgroups thereof to do all of the following:

18 (1) Solicit feedback regarding challenges with existing  
19 permitting processes, and recommendations and concerns from  
20 permittees and other interested parties regarding streamlining  
21 proposals.

22 (2) Review and seek comment on draft reform proposals from  
23 the Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group's Coastal  
24 Resilience Permitting Roadmap.